NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE DATE: Monday, August 7, 1967

The A. C. L. U. of New Jersey announced today that it will oppose a proposed Plainfield ordinance which seeks to make "loitering" a crime.

William Wright, an ACLU volunteer attorney from Plainfield and Jacques Sichel, Union County ACLU Chapter president will voice the Union's position at a Plainfield Town Council meeting on Monday, August 7, 1967, at 8:00 P. M.

The proposed ordinance would make it a crime to "remain idle or loiter" ... in or on the public streets, sidewalks, highways, roads, alleys, or any other public grounds, places or buildings.

The ACLU spokesmen will assert the proposal is unconstitutionally vague and seeks to punish innocent behavior. According to the ACLU, "Two Supreme Court cases have struck down similar ordinances and there are a whole raft of other courts that have done the same thing. In New Jersey, the Appellate Division in striking down a Hackensack loitering ordinance in 1963, said:

> "Obviously, the ordinance is not meant to punish all such loitering, nor could it constitutionally do so, for then every window shopper would be subject to prosecution. Thus we see that the ordinance is so vague and indefinite that it gives no guide or standard by which to determine who is loitering".

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The ACLU will also charge that the ordinance "is pure and simple class legislation designed to provide the thinnest veneer of legality for 'rounding up Negroes' and 'getting them off the streets' ".

Plainfield was the scene of a mass search for firearms of a low income housing project in the Negro ghetto two weeks ago.

"Passage of the ordinance, according to the ACLU, will be considered a direct attack on the Negro community and in our opinion, that's exactly what it is -- a direct attack".

CONTACT: Henry M. di Suvero
642-2084
or
865-6881